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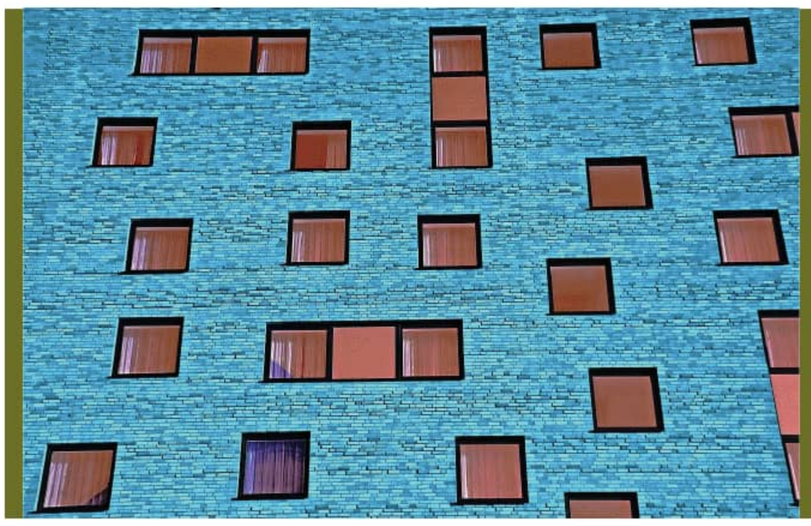
Bangalore Mirror

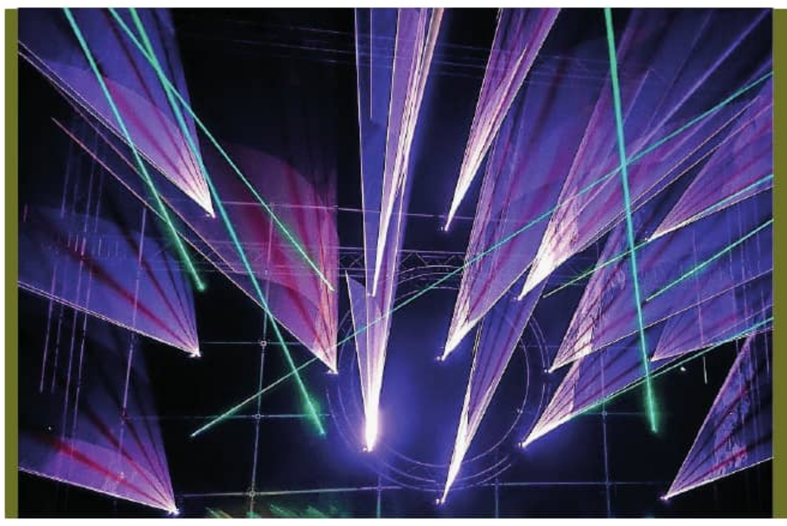
TEMP Max 27 | Min 16 | Humidity 45% Mostly sunny Sensex 85,762 | Nifty 26,328 | Gold 1,35,766 | Silver 2,35,999 | Dollar 90.11 | Euro 105.72 | GBP 121.44



QUICK REMEDY

Some flats are yet to be ready in apartment complex, but BDA wants home-owners to cobble up residents' welfare association already

PAGE 2



GLITCH IN THE MATRIX

After recording no laser interference incidents for years, Kempegowda International Airport suddenly saw 10 cases in 2024

PAGE 3

Data shows just 13.2% of domestic violence cases over three years flagged false and among these too, many are labelled so because they did not result in convictions

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

Police say false allegations can undermine genuine survivors' credibility, but insist such cases are rare

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Even as cases of molestation, cruelty by husbands, and dowry harassment continue to be reported in large numbers across the city, police say they are also encountering complaints alleging false accusations during investigations, often framed as misuse of domestic violence laws.

However, official data indicate that just about 13.2% of cases registered in the past three years were later identified as false.

However, even these are not necessarily fake complaints, experts explain.

Over the past three years, 7,946 cases have been reported under three categories of crime against women among which nearly 1,052 cases have been identified as false cases. But, advocate Rajalaxmi told BM that this does not mean they were fake. "Most of these cases have not resulted in convictions. This does not necessarily mean that all of them were false or fabricated. In several instances, cases were withdrawn by women due to various circumstances," she explained.

Senior police officials said that protecting survivors and ensuring action in genuine cases remains the priority, but there are also cases where accused persons have approached the police and courts claiming that complaints were exaggerated or falsely filed due to personal disputes, relationship fallouts, or conflicts. "False cases exist, but they are just a small fraction," an official said.

According to a senior officer, in cases registered as dowry harassment, the offence is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

> **"Every complaint is treated seriously at the initial stage. However, during the course of investigation, inconsistencies may surface, leading the accused to allege that the complaint was motivated or false**
>
> —Police official

Caught them young

Study reveals 1 in 3 adolescents in city at risk of health issues due to tobacco, alcohol use

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One in three adolescents in Bengaluru are at risk of developing health issues due to use of alcohol or tobacco, research has found.

A study conducted on 4,093 students from pre-university courses, undergraduate colleges, and higher secondary classes from four educational institutions in the city shows that while 33 percent of these young adults use alcohol, nearly 18 percent are addicted to tobacco.

The tobacco and alcohol use in Bengaluru is much higher than the national prevalence rate of 8.7 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively. It is also higher when compared with alcohol consumption rate (8.5 percent) and tobacco use (4.7 percent) in Karnataka.

The study conducted by researchers from St. John's Medical College, CHRIST University, and Kasturba Medical College in Manipal also shows that the median age of starting alcohol consumption in Bengaluru's adolescents was 17 years. Moreover, some started as early as 8 years old, which is much less than the legal age of drinking in India.

Experts say curiosity is the main reason

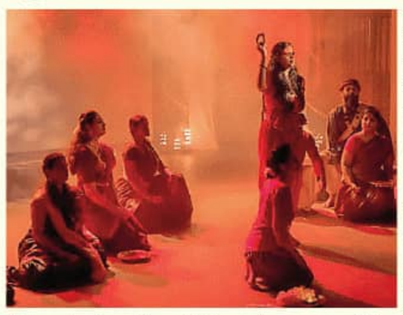
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

THINGS TO DO

01 Pet gala

Pet Fed is back with two days of pure joy for pets and pet lovers alike, bringing paw-sitivity, fun, and unforgettable experiences. **Where: KTPO, Whitefield; When: January 17, 11 am**

02 Spotlight saga



Bangalore Little Theatre is presenting a stage adaptation of the 2nd-century Tamil epic following the fateful journey of Kannagi, the devoted wife of Kovalan, and her timeless legend about chastity, truth, and the devastating cost of injustice. **Where: Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield; When: February 7, 8, 3.30 pm and 7.30 pm**

03 Cue the crescendo

Piyush Mishra will be performing live as part of the Aarambh 2.0 India Tour, redefining live performance by blending music, poetry, and theatre into an unforgettable experience. **Where: Phoenix Marketcity, Whitefield; When: January 17, 7 pm**

04 Sky full of stories

Ranga Shankara returns with its signature intimate storytelling programme, Little Cloud, packed with an enchanting experience of creativity, laughter and imagination. The sessions are held for children aged 4 to 6 every Saturday and Sunday. **Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: January 3 to March 15, 10 am**

05 Music, mood, magic

Known for his soulful vocals and heartfelt compositions, Gajendra Verma will be performing live, bringing a night of music, emotions, and memories. **Where: Orion Mall, Rajajinagar; When: February 7, 6 pm**

Form an RWA now, figure out rules later

BDA notice directing formation of residents' association within one week amidst lack of clarity on guidelines or registering authority leaves homeowners confused

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Hundreds of families residing at a residential apartment complex constructed by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) at Gunjur in Mahadevapura Assembly Constituency were left stunned after receiving a notice from the BDA, directing them to form a Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) within a week.

The notice, dated December 23, 2025, stated that the BDA would stop maintenance of the residential complex from January 1, 2026, and the residents must inform the Assistant Executive Engineer (Housing) on December 28, 2025, on the measures taken to form the RWA.

The residents of the apartment complex said that construction of some of the flats is yet to be completed and many developmental works, including construction of the compound wall, are pending. They complained that some of the lifts have become defunct and the agency assigned for the maintenance of the lifts refused to repair them as the annual maintenance contract (AMC) was not renewed and the BDA is yet to clear pending dues.

Bangalore Mirror published a story 'Home is where the hurt is' on October 20, 2022, narrating how the residents had been suffering due to shoddy maintenance, lax electricity, water supply and other amenities.

"The compound wall is yet to be constructed. The sewage treatment plant is not functioning. The BDA bought a generator but kept it idle for five years. There is a dispute over two acres of land and the authorities have not taken measures to solve the dispute. The lifts at a few blocks are not working since December 4," said Narayana Shetty, a resident. He said that the residents are planning to meet the BDA officials on Monday to narrate their problems.

Urging authorities to appoint an agency to repair the defunct lifts, Rohith H, a seventh-floor resident, said that the lift has remained non-functional for over a month. "We have to use stairs to get to our flat. My father, who had a surgery a few years ago, is not able to come down due to the lack of a lift," he said.

Residents of BDA-developed apartment complex say property still has pending work and various maintenance issues including lack of functioning lift, while urging authorities to look into matter

Karnataka Home Buyers Forum Convenor Dhananjaya Padmanabhachar said that issuing notices to flat owners of the BDA-developed apartment complex to form an RWA seems absurd, as neither the state government nor the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA) has released guidelines on registering apartment owners' associations, nor identified or assigned a department authorised to carry out such registrations. "BDA is a government organisation but it is not aware of this issue. BDA Commissioner must seek directions from the government on registration of apartment owners' association and send notices to flat owners of BDA-developed apartment complexes in compliance with RERA norms," he said.

Platform for artists, art lovers

Art is a mirror of the state's culture, and Chitra Santhe has provided a strong platform for artists and art lovers, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said. He was speaking after inaugurating the 23rd edition of Chitra Santhe, organised by the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath at its premises on Kumara Krupa Road in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The Chief Minister said this was the eighth time he was participating in Chitra Santhe as Chief Minister. He noted that for the past 60 years, the Chitrakala Parishath has consistently worked to encourage artists by creating opportunities to exhibit and sell their paintings. Chitra Santhe has now entered its 23rd year, with participation from artists representing 22 states and four Union Territories, he added.

Green focus

Stating that there is demand for achievers' museums in every district, Siddaramaiah said the government would consider such requests positively. He said this year's Chitra Santhe theme has been dedicated to the environment. If we protect the environment, it will protect us, and awareness on environmental issues is essential, he said, adding that the government has launched several programmes in this direction. He pointed out that pollution has increased in Bengaluru and many other cities, and conditions in Delhi have become difficult for living, underlining that environmental protection has become an urgent necessity. The Chief Minister said the government has taken up a programme to plant three to five crore saplings every year.

— BMB

New Kannada learning initiative launched at Pai Layout

Unique spoken Kannada classes held by out of state man aims to help residents of area learn how to converse in language

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While several social organisations in Bengaluru conduct spoken Kannada classes for non-Kannadigas, a new initiative at Pai Layout stands out. Launched last Sunday, the weekly one-hour session is unique because it is being taught by a non-Kannadiga for fellow residents of Pai Layout, often described as 'mini India' in East Bengaluru. The Pai Layout Residents' Welfare Association is facilitating the classes every Sunday from 4 pm to 5 pm at its office.

"I have been residing at Pai Layout for more than a decade. I thought of contributing something to this residential area. I readily agreed when Pai Layout Residents' Welfare Association Secretary NH Balasubramanian approached me. I am from Kerala but had an opportunity to study Kannada at a government school in Kasargod. I studied Kannada from Class 1 to 10," said Balasubrahmanyan S. He said that he teaches Kannada words to those attending the Sunday evening class, and is delighted with the positive response, aiming to help the residents learn the language easily.

NH Balasubramanian, Secretary of Pai Layout Residents' Welfare Association, said that more than 20 residents attended the spoken Kannada class on December 28 and around 40 residents were expected to attend the class on January 4. "Our association office can accommodate 50 people at a time. We may have to look for another place for conducting classes based on the response from the residents. A research student from the US is my inspiration to facilitate the spoken Kannada classes. She managed to speak Kannada in three months while doing research at Benniganahalli Lake," said Balasubramanian.

Residents of Pai Layout at the spoken Kannada classes

Residents of Pai Layout express joy over opportunity to learn Kannada through community initiative

Geetha Balasubramanian, a 70-year-old homemaker, is one of the residents who attends the spoken Kannada class. "I have been residing here for 25 years. I never felt the need to speak in Kannada as many residents are from neighbouring states," she noted. She said she finds it difficult to manage daily conversations, but after joining the classes, she believes it will greatly help her communicate in Kannada.

PV Subramanian, a resident at Pai Layout for over 25 years, said he hadn't learned Kannada yet. "I am from Kerala. All these years, I have had no chance to learn Kannada. Now, I can speak a few words in Kannada after joining the classes," said Subramanian. Expressing a similar opinion, Pushpinder, another resident, highlighted that he hails from Odisha. "I am very happy to have this opportunity. I am confident about speaking Kannada fluently in a few months," he said.

Insurance safety net announced after payout shock

Alarmed by a technical lapse that resulted in the family of late IAS officer Mahantesh Bilagi receiving nearly Rs 50 lakh less in insurance compensation, Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Dr Sharanaprakash R Patil has ordered mandatory term insurance coverage for all doctors, officers and staff under his department.

The issue surfaced during a governing council meeting of a medical college where a Finance Department official pointed out that the officer had not updated his service status after his elevation to the IAS, leading to a lower payout.

Taking immediate note, the Minister directed Additional Chief Secretary Mohammed Mohsin to issue a circular ensuring employees pay term insurance premiums in line with their current designation and salary, so that families are not deprived of rightful benefits in case of an untimely death.

To make the move practical and inclusive, Dr Patil also asked officials to rope in banks and insurance firms to design affordable and comprehensive schemes, particularly for lower-paid staff who may have stayed away due to cost or lack of awareness.

The department will also examine extending similar cover to contract employees. In a parallel decision aimed at workforce stability, the Minister instructed medical colleges and hospitals to consider absorbing experienced outsourced staff into contract posts by following the reservation roster, instead of opting for fresh temporary recruitment. **BMB**

B'luru airport sees spike in cases of laser interference

From just 16 in 2023, cases shot up to staggering 548 in 2024, highlighting need for stricter enforcement, public awareness and faster identification of offenders

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After recording no laser interference incidents for years, Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport witnessed a sudden and sharp spike in 2024, reporting 10 cases in a single year from zero until 2023, according to parliamentary data. Though the number dropped to one incident in 2025 so far, the sudden emergence of laser interference has raised serious safety concerns at one of India's busiest aviation hubs.

Aviation experts warn that even brief laser illumination can distract or temporarily blind pilots during critical phases of flight. The parliamentary data underlines the need for stricter enforcement, public awareness and faster identification of offenders, particularly in fast-growing cities like Bengaluru where air traffic continues to rise sharply.

The Bengaluru spike mirrors a nationwide trend. Across India, laser interference incidents at airports shot up from just 16 cases in 2023 to a staggering 548 in 2024, marking an increase of more than 3,300 per cent in absolute terms. While the total marginally declined to 534 incidents in 2025, the persistence of high numbers suggests laser strikes have become a recurring aviation safety risk rather than a temporary phenomenon.

Beyond Bengaluru, other Karnataka airports have also reported incidents. Mysuru recorded three laser incidents in 2024 and two in 2025, while Mangaluru saw cases rise from nine in 2024 to 11 in 2025, signalling a growing problem along the coast. Kalaburagi, which had no incidents earlier, reported three cases in 2025.

Taken together, Karnataka airports reported over 30 incidents across 2024 and 2025, placing the state in the middle tier nationally but showing a widening spread beyond the capital. At the national level, Delhi topped the list with 113 incidents in 2024 and 105 in 2025, followed by Chennai and Hyderabad.

Prohibition on laser lights

Replying in Parliament, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said the issue is regulated under Rule 66 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937, which prohibits the exhibition of false lights, including laser lights, in the vicinity of aerodromes if they pose a risk to aircraft safety or interfere with visual navigation aids. The minister added that the DGCA has laid down specific safeguards under Civil Aviation Requirements, which mandate protection of aircraft operations from the hazardous effects of laser emitters around airports. These include creation of protected zones to mitigate risks from laser emissions, while standard operating procedures are also defined in the aerodrome manuals of respective airports to monitor and control laser-related activities in airport surroundings.

Online abuse targeting Darshan's family: 2 more arrested

The city's cyber crime police have arrested two more men for allegedly posting defamatory and obscene content against Vijayalakshmi, wife of jailed Kannada actor Darshan, on social media platforms.

The arrests follow a complaint filed by Vijayalakshmi on December 24, in which she alleged that several individuals were targeting her and her family with abusive posts and messages online. Police said the content included vulgar and obscene remarks, prompting her to seek legal action against more than 18 social media users.

During the course of the investigation, two accused were arrested earlier, and on January 4, police picked up Nagaraj Gullappa Talawar, 23, a petrol bunk manager from Keshavapura in Hubballi, and Prashanth Talawar, 23, an auditor from Yalawal in Dharwad, for questioning in the case. Efforts are on to trace the remaining suspects, police said. **BMB**

Eco-friendly boating planned in 20 lakes across city

In a move aimed at boosting public engagement while protecting ecology, the city administration has proposed eco-friendly boating facilities in 20 lakes across Bengaluru in the first phase. The initiative will be taken up in coordination with the Tourism Department, with a clear focus on sustainability and zero pollution.

Officials said only non-fuel, environment-friendly boats will be permitted, ensuring that aquatic life remains undisturbed. The lakes are to be developed as public attraction centres without compromising ecological balance.

Directions have also been issued to adopt a zero-pollution model and give priority to nature-based solutions in all lake-related development works.

As part of integrated planning, authorities have been asked to study the regulated rearing of ducks in lakes, with maintenance and management to be awarded through a legal tender process if found feasible.

At the same time, flood-prone areas in the city will be identified

and nature-based flood mitigation measures taken up on priority before the monsoon. Officials said a list of lakes suitable for boating will be prepared, focusing on larger water bodies with scope for parking and basic amenities. After approval from the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority, the proposal will be forwarded to the Tourism Department.

The boating facilities are also expected to generate revenue for urban local bodies through fixed monthly or annual fees, while strengthening long-term environmental sustainability. **BMB**

Chinnaswamy Stadium gets ready for IPL

With the 19th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) around the corner, the Karnataka State Cricket Association has kicked off renovation works at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium to prepare for hosting matches. The move follows directions from the state government to implement the recommendations of the Justice Michael D Cunha Committee, formed to review safety and crowd management at the venue. Acting on these guidelines, KSCA has begun work to widen entry and exit gates and undertake essential repairs.

KSCA officials said priority is being given to expanding access points to ensure smoother crowd movement. "Renovation work has started as per the committee's recommendations and will be completed within a month," an official said. The IPL season is set to begin on March 26. Although the renovation is expected to be completed by February, officials said government authorities will inspect the stadium and assess compliance before granting final permission. **BMB**

Second Bengaluru airport plan faces key policy hurdles and terrain risks

AAI pre-feasibility studies flag site challenges as state weighs in on locations, legal restrictions, airspace limits and long-term demand beyond Kempegowda Airport

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Consultants will assess land, connectivity, noise impact and aviation safety constraints to determine the most suitable site for Bengaluru's future airport

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has conducted pre-feasibility studies for three potential sites for a second airport in Bengaluru, based on a request from the Karnataka government, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol informed the Lok Sabha recently. The preliminary reports have been submitted to the State government, but the Ministry of Civil Aviation has not received any formal proposal under the Greenfield Airport (GFA) policy from either Karnataka or any airport developer for moving forward with the project.

The Minister said that any proposal for a new airport in or around Bengaluru must take into account the concession agreement between the Government of India and Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL). Under the agreement, no new or existing airport except for the development of Mysuru and Hassan as domestic airports can be developed, upgraded or improved within a 150-km radius of Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) before the completion of its 25th anniversary. Any move to establish another airport within this zone, or to reopen the HAL airport for civilian operations, would require the consent of BIAL.

Earlier, the Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (KSIIDC) had invited tenders to appoint a consultancy firm to prepare a detailed technical and financial feasibility report for a second international airport. Three locations have been shortlisted—Choodahalli and Somanahalli along Kanakapura Road, and a site near Nelamangala. A high-level AAI team has already inspected these sites and submitted a preliminary assessment to the State government.

Replying to a question in the Legislative Council, Industries and Infrastructure Development Minister M B Patil said that a technical team from the Airports Authority of India had inspected all three locations as early as April last year and a pre-feasibility report had been obtained from the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation. However, based on AAI's recommendations on the suitability of the identified sites, the government has now floated a tender to appoint consultants to conduct a detailed feasibility study.

The selected consultancy firm, which must have executed projects worth at least ₹250 crore annually over the past five years, will assess a range of parameters. These include rainfall patterns, topography, availability of power and water, sewerage and waste management infra-

Three shortlisted sites face cost, terrain and airspace constraints, with formal approvals pending, as the state commissions detailed studies to prepare for projected passenger growth and possible HAL reopening plans

structure, surrounding population, regional development prospects and potential noise pollution. The study will also estimate development costs, land requirements, and approvals needed from authorities such as the Ministry of Defence and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. The impact on industries, tourism and public mobility, along with cargo handling capacity, passenger services and overall economic viability, will also be examined.

AAI has flagged several challenges at the shortlisted sites, noting that undulating terrain and hillocks could significantly increase construction costs. It has also pointed out that the presence of HAL Airport, KIA and other nearby airfields places the region within restricted airspace, necessitating a clear definition of airspace for safe operations. Given the proximity to hilly terrain and Bannerghatta National Park, AAI has recommended conducting Obstacle Limitation Surface and Instrument Flight Procedure surveys, along with a detailed noise pollution study, before any further decision.

Mr. Patil said that KIA currently ranks second in the country in terms of passenger density, and projections indicate the need for another airport by 2033. He added that the State was initiating studies well in advance to address future air traffic demand, while the proposal to reopen HAL Airport for civilian flights remains under examination.

Experts warn against harsh stray dog crackdowns

As the city grapples with a rising stray dog population, experts are urging authorities to avoid short-term and punitive responses, warning that such measures often worsen the problem. They argue that relocating street dogs is neither practical nor effective, and frequently leads to ecological imbalance, territorial conflicts and added pressure on already stretched civic staff.

Animal welfare specialists stress that aggressive or injured dogs should be taken to Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres for treatment, sterilisation and vaccination, and then released back into the same locality. Returning dogs to their original areas is crucial, they say, as street dogs are highly territorial and tend to migrate back, or leave vacant spaces that attract new animals. To make this approach work, experts call for a significant expansion of ABC centres and uninterrupted, large-scale sterilisation drives with active public participation. Poor waste management has been flagged as a key driver of rising dog numbers. Open garbage bins and unsegregated food waste provide easy access to food. Experts say strict segregation, timely clearance and designated feeding spots can reduce conflict at minimal cost. They also recommend community-based monitoring involving resident welfare associations. In sensitive zones, fencing is preferred over removal to prevent reoccupation.

Experts add that sustained public awareness, clear coordination between civic agencies and animal welfare groups, and transparent data on sterilisation outcomes are essential to ensure humane dog population management and long-term urban safety.

— BMB

Metro link planned to Anekal stadium

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited is planning a dedicated Metro link to the proposed multi-sports complex, including a cricket stadium, at Anekal to ensure smooth public access. Officials said the existing 68-km Metro corridor running along Bannerghatta Road, connecting Kalena Agrahara and Kadugodi, will be branched at Jigani and extended by about 3.5 km towards Anekal. The extension will directly serve the sports complex being planned at Surya City in Anekal, while the main corridor will continue on its existing route.

The extension is expected to benefit commuters from Bannerghatta, Jigani and Anekal, with the larger corridor also linking areas such as Attibele, Sarjapur, Dommasandra Circle and Varthur Kodi. Following the stampede incident at Chinnaswamy Stadium in June, the state government had decided to develop a multi-sports complex, including a cricket stadium, over 75 acres at Surya Nagar Phase 4 in Anekal at an estimated cost of around ₹1,650 crore.

A Delhi-based firm has submitted a feasibility report on the Metro extension, covering route alignment, ridership demand, land acquisition, project cost and station locations. With the proposed 3.5-km spur line, the total length of the corridor will increase to about 72 km, a senior BMRCL official said. — BMB

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GPO road repair

Cubbon Park

Repairs were taken up on the road beside the GPO compound near Cubbon Park Metro station after a damaged manhole posed risks at this busy junction.

Stray dog threat

Kavalbyrasandra

Stray dogs continue to endanger schoolchildren on 1st Main Road, MM Layout, highlighting lapses in the ABC programme despite Supreme Court directions.

Obscured signboards

Rajajinagar

Traffic signboards at Rajajinagar 1st Block Signal have been covered with posters, creating visibility issues and potential safety hazards for motorists.

Phase VI Cauvery project under review for govt approval

Sixth phase expected to bolster city's water security, ensuring equitable distribution across city and suburban communities

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The Cauvery sixth phase water supply project has been prepared and is currently under government review for administrative approval, aiming to further strengthen Bengaluru's drinking water infrastructure. The city's current daily water supply from the Cauvery system stands at 1,871 million litres per day (MLD), delivered through multiple phases. Phase I and II each supply 135 MLD, Phase III contributes 330 MLD, Phase IV delivers 300 MLD, Phase IV Stage II adds 550 MLD, and Phase V provides 421 MLD.

Future planning

During a recent reply in the legislature, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said, "After the completion of Phase V, Bengaluru's drinking water requirement has been projected at 26.20 thousand million cubic feet (TMC) for long-term planning. The Phase VI feasibility and detailed project report (DPR) has been prepared and is under government scrutiny for approval, with the aim of expanding the city's water distribution capacity."

Route allocation

He said that the sixth phase is planned to channel water primarily through Malavalli and TK Halli, while alternative routes are being assessed. Once implemented, the project will distribute a total of 6 TMC of water, with 4 TMC allocated to Bengaluru city and 2 TMC earmarked for suburban areas, in coordination with the Karnataka Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department and the Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

Suburban supply

DKS said that suburban areas set to benefit from sixth phase include Madanayakanahalli, Hunasemaranahalli, Chikkabanavara, Nelamangala, Hosakote, Devanahalli, Bashettihalli, and Vijayapura, which will receive bulk water supply through dedicated pipelines. "The government is reviewing the DPR to ensure route feasibility, resource allocation, and project execution. Upon approval, the sixth phase is expected to bolster Bengaluru's water security, ensuring equitable distribution across city and suburban communities," the Deputy CM added.

Dirty water raises a stink, citizens raise alarm

Residents of KSFC Layout left struggling as polluted water forces suspension of water supply in area, with cause and location of contamination yet to be determined

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A major disaster was narrowly averted at KSFC Layout near Lingarajapuram after alert residents informed Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) engineers about Cauvery water being contaminated with sewage. While officials eventually halted the supply, the delay left affected households grappling with the crisis in silence.

Residents of 3rd B Main, 2nd Cross in KSFC Layout reportedly noticed the water had turned brownish-black and foul-smelling. "I noticed the water was stinky 15 days ago. The quality of water deteriorated four days ago and the colour of the water was brownish black. I have been residing here for 32 years and it is for the first time I noticed drinking water like this. I spent Rs 2,000 to clean the sump and two Sintex water tanks. The BWSSB engineers stopped water supply from Saturday," said V Ranganath, a resident.

Expressing concern over the supply of contaminated water, Prof Paul Newman, another resident, said that he too had spent money to clean the sump and overhead water tanks. "We noticed stinky water last week and complained to the authorities but in vain. Now, we have to clean water purifiers. As of now, we are buying drinking water," he said.

The residents said that after repeated complaints, the BWSSB engineers visited the spot and engaged workers to dig the road and cut the pipes in a few places, but they are yet to determine the cause and location of the place where the sewerage is getting mixed with Cauvery water. A few residents complained they suspect water-borne diseases in recent months, as several people have repeatedly fallen ill.

Condition of water pipes in area; Contaminated water collected from a sump

Residents say issue has persisted for days, while officials maintain that efforts are underway to locate source of water contamination and problem will be resolved soon

"My wife noticed Cauvery water turning black and polluted last Saturday. We took to social media to alert residents in the area. Four to five houses are badly affected on this road due to water contamination. We have cleaned sump and overhead tanks. The BWSSB engineer made arrangements to supply 1500 litres of Cauvery water to every household," said Sanjeev Kumar S, a resident.

P Jayaseelan, President of KSFC Layout Residents' Welfare Association, said the KSFC RWA has already appealed to Sarvagna Nagar MLA and Energy Minister KJ George to direct the authorities concerned to replace underground drainage (UGD) pipes that were laid more than three decades ago, as the UGD pipes may no longer withstand the sewage load with an increase in the number of houses. "The UGD pipes were laid based on the buildings constructed those days. Now, the number of houses has been increased and the need of the hour is to replace old and worn out UGD pipes. Our MLA has also directed the executive engineer to look into the matter. I hope that he will take measures to fix this problem," said Jayaseelan.

BWSSB Executive Engineer Channabasavaiah said that all efforts are being made to locate the source of water contamination. "We have dug up at a few places to locate the source of water contamination. We will fix this problem soon. We have made arrangements to supply drinking water through a water tanker," the executive engineer said.

GBA detects tax evasion in 69 buildings

The GBA has uncovered property tax evasion by 69 commercial buildings on Margosa Road in West Bengaluru, which were paying taxes under the residential category. The violations came to light during a revenue revision campaign in Ward 64 of the Malleswaram division. Officials found that several property owners had declared commercial buildings as residential properties and under-reported built-up areas under the self-assessment scheme. In some cases, vacant plots were being used for car parking and other commercial activities while continuing to pay lower residential or vacant land tax.

Officials who inspected the area, instructed the scrutiny of all such cases and recovery of the differential tax amount wherever discrepancies are found. Officials were also directed that commercial tax be levied on vacant sites being used for non-residential purposes and verification of approved building plans to ensure properties are taxed according to their actual usage. **–BMB**

Interest, penalty on water bills to be waived off

In a major relief to water consumers, the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will roll out a one-time interest and penalty waiver scheme on pending water bills from January 16. Consumers who clear the entire principal amount by March 31 will get a 100 per cent waiver on accumulated interest and penalties.

The board has set a revenue target of Rs 550 crore through the initiative and will soon issue notices to residential, commercial and office establishments with arrears, detailing the total dues and the waiver benefit. Officials said there would be no need for consumers to visit BWSSB offices, as the waiver will be applied automatically once the principal amount is paid.

As of December-end, arrears from 6.22 lakh connections stood at nearly Rs 2,850 crore, with the principal amount at about Rs 550 crore. BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said the scheme, inspired by a similar model implemented in Hyderabad, aims to improve collections and support infrastructure projects. Payments can be made through BWSSB offices, Bengaluru One centres or online, and intermediaries will not be allowed, the board clarified. **–BMB**

KFD cracks down on drone videos in Kali Tiger Reserve

Forest officials issue notices after tourists fly drones, film core wildlife zone, prompting enforcement and warnings near Shivpur Hanging Bridge

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Unauthorised drone activity near the suspension bridge led to intensified patrolling, warning signboards, and action under the Wildlife Protection Act, officials said

Authorities say unauthorised drone filming threatened sensitive species, violated Wildlife Protection Act, and exposed security risks, after conservationists flagged social media videos shot inside the Kali River valley landscape today

The Karnataka Forest Department has issued notices to three tourists for illegally capturing drone videos of Shivpur Hanging Bridge in Kali Tiger Reserve and posting them on social media.

The action followed a complaint by a wildlife conservationist after videos of the bridge and its surrounding forest landscape surfaced on social media platforms. Forest officials said the footage was shot using drones inside a core wildlife zone, where unauthorised entry, filming and drone operations are strictly prohibited under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Officials said such activities violate statutory provisions and pose risks to wildlife, habitat integrity and security in the ecologically sensitive Kali River valley. "Three YouTube channels that conducted unauthorised drone filming have been identified, and notices have been issued to the respective channel owners for further investigation," an official from the Kali Tiger Reserve administration said.

In a written communication, the Reserve administration acknowledged that the village forest committee of Dehalli Panchayat in the Yellapur division had collected an entry fee from tourists visiting the hanging bridge and granted permission for access. Officials clarified that such permissions do not extend to core forest areas or allow the use of drones or filming equipment.

To strengthen enforcement, warning signboards have been installed near the bridge stating that unauthorised entry and drone usage are prohibited. Additional forest personnel have been deployed, and patrolling has been intensified to prevent further violations. "Action will be taken against those involved in unauthorised activities in accordance with the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972," the official said.

The Reserve administration has written to the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Yellapur Regional Division, directing a prohibition on the use of drones, filming and cameras by tourists visiting the suspension bridge. The Police Department and Karnataka Power Corporation Limited have been asked to act within their jurisdictions if violations are detected and to immediately alert the Forest Department.

The issue was first flagged over a month ago when a wildlife conservationist submitted a written complaint citing illegal drone operations in and around the bridge. The complaint warned that drone activity could cause severe stress to wildlife, particularly species such as tigers, leopards, hornbills and elephants inhabiting the region.

AI command centre to monitor forests

The In a major technology-driven initiative, Karnataka's forests will now be monitored centrally from Bengaluru through artificial intelligence and GPS-based systems, with the Forest Department setting up a state-level Integrated Command and Control Centre. The facility, supported by seven divisional control rooms, is designed to track wildlife movement in real time and prevent human–animal conflict before incidents occurs.

Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre said the emphasis has shifted from reacting to conflicts to preventing them altogether. With AI and GPS support, officials will be able to anticipate conflict-prone situations and ensure faster deployment of field teams. The public has been asked to dial the Forest helpline 1926 if wild animals are sighted outside forest areas. Alerts will be relayed instantly to concerned divisional and range-level teams. The system will monitor vulnerable zones, track radio-collared elephants, and oversee solar fencing, railway barriers and elephant-proof trenches. AI-enabled cameras and GPS-linked patrols will help deploy quick response teams, while residents in sensitive areas will receive timely alerts, strengthening efforts toward safer human–wildlife coexistence. — BMB

Bypoll prep begins in two constituencies

The Election Commission has begun preparatory work for by-elections to the Bagalkot and Davanagere South Assembly constituencies, which became vacant following the deaths of senior Congress leaders H Y Meti and Shamanur Shivashankarappa. As part of the process, a special revision of electoral rolls has been initiated in both segments. Draft voter lists were published on January 3 and made available on the Election Commission website, as well as at district and election offices. Voters have time until January 24 to verify their details and submit claims, objections or corrections. Officials said all applications will be examined and disposed of by Feb 7, with the final voter lists scheduled for release on Feb 14. Eligible voters can apply through prescribed forms, either offline or online. — BMB

Three minors booked under POCSO Act

Karnataka Police on Saturday registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act against three minor boys, aged 14 and 15, in connection with the sexual harassment of a minor girl in Hubballi. Police said the accused allegedly assaulted the girl repeatedly for seven to eight days while her parents were away at work during daytime hours. Following a complaint, all three minors were taken into custody. Police Commissioner N Shashikumar said the case involves offences and assured that procedures under the POCSO Act and Juvenile Justice Act would be followed. — ANI

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Not in a hurry

The desire to become Chief Minister exists, but there's absolutely no rush, says Assembly Speaker UT Khader. With chatter about a possible leadership shuffle in state politics, aspirants are lining up, but Khader, when asked if he's on that list, quipped that he still needs 20 more years and at least four more wins in his constituency before even thinking about it. On the topic of the tragic incident in Ballari, he added with a wry shake of the head that politics isn't a movie set, and hate-driven theatrics only erode public respect. Threatening fellow legislators while holding office? That, he said, is simply bad manners.

Sparks in the sky

A mysterious circular formation appeared in the sky over Telasang village in Athani taluk on Friday evening around 5 pm, leaving locals both fascinated and anxious. The strange shape lingered for about an hour, drawing villagers out of their homes, some capturing the eerie sight on their mobile phones. Whispers of aliens visiting the village quickly spread, as the unusual spectacle kept everyone guessing.

Chair politics

During a recent press interaction chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister, photographers suggested that DK Shivakumar take the central chair since he was seated to the side. With a smile, DKS refused, saying humorously that if he sat there, the "breaking news" would be that he had taken the CM's seat. "You guys are very dangerous," he added, keeping the mood light while playfully dodging the spotlight. He went on to joke about how every move he makes is scrutinised and instantly turned into headlines, making it almost impossible to sit anywhere without creating a buzz. The remark drew laughter from those present, and DKS used the moment to gently remind the media about the power of words while keeping the interaction informal and cheerful.

Farewell gesture

In a detour from the usual bureaucratic stiffness, Bengaluru Central City Corporation Commissioner Rajendra Cholan turned a routine departmental heads' meeting into a heartwarming spectacle of role reversal. To bid adieu to the December 2025 retirees—including Deputy Commissioner of Revenue Raju and several Pourakarmikas, the Commissioner decided that mere bouquets weren't enough. In a quirky, "commissioner-for-a-day", Cholan literally vacated his seat of power, insisting that the retiring Pourakarmikas take turns sitting in the Commissioner's high-backed chair to be honoured.

Lone woman CS

All eyes were on Karnataka Chief Secretary Dr Shalini Rajneesh at the fifth National Conference of Chief Secretaries in New Delhi recently, where she stood out as the only woman Chief Secretary among her peers. Held under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the meet focused on shaping India's growth roadmap through stronger Centre–state cooperation, with discussions ranging from human capital and education to technology in governance and smart supply chains, making her presence both symbolic and significant.

Pedal power

Last year he could barely walk, this year he pedalled all the way to Kanyakumari. At 70, Rajajinagar BJP MLA Suresh Kumar has pulled off a 702 km cycling feat from Bengaluru to Tamil Nadu's southern tip, proving recovery can sometimes come with gears and grit. Kumar set off on December 23 at 4 am with 12 friends from Basaveshwaranagar and rolled into Kanyakumari five days later, clocking 37 hours on the saddle. Surprisingly during his cycle journey, Kumar also got a call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his cyclathon. — Sridhar Vivan

BM SIMPLY PUT

A routine eviction snowballed into political flashpoint, exposing land scams

Enroachment row

What began as a routine eviction drive in north Bengaluru has escalated into a major political controversy. The demolition of "illegal" houses in Kogilu Colony, near Yelahanka, triggered sharp reactions from Kerala politicians, including Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. At the centre of the row is BSWML land meant for waste management, allegedly sold illegally to vulnerable families through forged documents.

Why were homes demolished in Kogilu?
The houses were built on BSWML land reserved exclusively for solid waste management infrastructure. Civic agencies say the land had been encroached upon gradually, with sheds and houses coming up without any legal approval. After repeated notices and internal reviews, authorities decided to clear the land to reclaim public property.

Was this land ever meant for housing?
No, the land was never notified for residential use at any point. It was formally transferred in 2016 to civic agencies specifically for waste management purposes. Officials say allowing housing there would have violated land-use norms and environmental regulations.

Who lived in these demolished houses?
The settlement was largely made up of homeless families, daily-wage workers, and migrants. Many residents were from Kerala and other states and had moved to Bengaluru in search of work. Several families claim they believed the land was legally allotted and had no reason to suspect fraud.

Who allowed construction on government land?
Authorities believe an organised network of local land sharks and middlemen operated in the area. These agents allegedly collected money, showed fake documents, and promised protection from eviction. Officials say the scale of construction suggests possible local-level collusion.

Did residents pay to build their homes?
Yes. Families allege they paid between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.5 lakh to build sheds or small houses. They claim the payments were made in instalments to intermediaries who managed the settlement. Some residents also allege a monthly collection in the name of electricity charges.

Were official permissions shown by residents genuine?
Some residents have produced documents claiming temporary permission under land revenue laws. Civic officials say these papers are highly suspect and are now being verified. Preliminary checks indicate the documents may have been forged or misused.

What evidence proves encroachment?
Satellite images prepared by the Bengaluru Urban district administration show the land was largely vacant in 2023. Encroachments increased sharply in 2024 and 2025, with green patches disappearing rapidly. Officials say several structures appeared overnight, pointing to organised activity.

Why did this turn into a political issue?
The demolition displaced several migrant families from Kerala. Political leaders there accused Karnataka of targeting migrants and raised the issue publicly. This quickly escalated into an inter-state political confrontation.

Is Karnataka targeting migrant workers?
The Karnataka government has denied the allegation. Officials insist the action was strictly against illegal encroachment on public land. They say no community or state was singled out.

What does this episode expose?
The case highlights how land-grabbing networks exploit the poor using fake documents. It also raises questions about enforcement failures and local influence. Officials admit the issue has exposed serious systemic gaps.

What happens next?
Investigations have been launched into forged documents and illegal money collections. Officials say those responsible for selling government land will be booked. The government has promised tighter monitoring to prevent similar incidents.

Families move High Court after Kogilu demolition

Residents allege illegal demolitions, seek rehabilitation, compensation and immediate humanitarian relief

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Residents affected by a recent demolition drive in Kogilu Layout near Yelahanka in Bengaluru have approached the Karnataka High Court by filing a public interest litigation (PIL), challenging the legality of the eviction carried out by government authorities.

The petition has been filed by Jaiba Tabassum, Rehana and Arif Begum, who state that over 300 houses in Wasim Colony and Fakir Colony were razed without prior notice or consultation. They argue that the action violates Supreme Court guidelines, which mandate that authorities issue show-cause notices and provide residents with at least 15 days' time before carrying out demolitions.

According to the petitioners, the sudden eviction left hundreds of families homeless and resulted in the loss of

IN HIGH COURT

personal belongings. Students were particularly affected, with textbooks, school uniforms and examination-related documents reportedly destroyed during the demolition.

The plea seeks urgent intervention from the court, including rehabilitation or alternative housing within a five-kilometre radius, compensation for the demolished homes, and medical assistance for those who sustained injuries during the drive.

The State Human Rights Commission has also taken note of the incident after receiving several complaints and conducting a site visit. In its preliminary observations, the commission emphasised that eviction drives, even when carried out in the public interest, must uphold constitutional rights such as dignity and the right to life. It recommended that authorities ensure temporary shelter, access to drinking water, sanitation facilities and healthcare for those displaced.

Although officials had earlier assured that housing would be provided to more than 150 affected families by the beginning of the year, the process has reportedly stalled. Advocacy groups have criticised the delay, pointing out that new eligibility criteria and documentation requirements contradict earlier assurances that relief would be extended to all displaced residents.

On an average, young adults start drinking at 17

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for high prevalence of alcohol and tobacco use. While nearly half of the participants said they tried a tobacco product because of their curiosity and approximately 18% of them used it every day.

"Cigarettes were the most popular product used, probably because of its legal marketing in the Indian subcontinent, ready availability, and unrestricted sale.

The majority of users reported a sense of feeling good when they consumed tobacco.

This is because it causes an adrenaline rush when absorbed in the bloodstream or inhaled via smoking and triggers an increase in dopamine that stimulates the area of the brain associated with pleasure and reward. However, a good number of consumers of tobacco have also reported a history of having sought help to quit tobacco," researchers noted in the study.

Daily drinking

The situation is grim when it comes to the frequency of alcohol and tobacco consumption, too. While 4.7 percent of the participants, with an average age of around 18 years, said that they consumed alcohol every day, a little over 5 percent of the participants admitted that they spent more than 5 hours on a drinking day. Experts say this trend is a matter of concern as frequent alcohol consumption interferes with decision-making ability and also hampers academic potential.

"Daily alcohol use among underage students is of particular concern. Given the long-term health risks and addictive potential of these substances, there is a need for timely interventions beginning at the school and early college level, supported by parents and the wider community," researchers noted.

Against aggression

Members of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) (SUCI) stage a protest against the alleged US attack on Venezuela at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru on Sunday

Mulling handing over Ballari firing case to CID, says Parameshwara

The Karnataka government is mulling handing over the probe into the recent violent clashes in Ballari, in which one person was killed, to the CID, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Sunday.

The clashes were triggered by a dispute over tying a banner near BJP MLA G Janardhana Reddy's residence and violence broke broke out between the supporters of the BJP legislator and Congress MLA Nara Bharath Reddy on January 1. A Congress worker was killed.

The incident involved firing, raising questions over the use of private firearms.

"I had said this before, the guns of the gunmen hired for private security have been seized. Now the ballistic expert's report will reveal from which gun it was fired. I have told the Forensic Science Laboratory officials to give an investigation report. The process is on. The ADGP had told me that the firing didn't happen with a police gun," Parameshwara told reporters.

When asked whether the case would be handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) or a special investigation team (SIT), the Home Minister said the option was under consideration.

"We are also mulling it. There are possibilities of giving the matter to the CID. I will speak to CM Siddaramaiah. If need be then we will do it," he said.

Responding to the BJP's announcement on taking out a march to Ballari, Parameshwara said, "It's not a big thing to take out a march but taking action is important, which the police will do." He said strict action would follow if the involvement of private gunmen was established.

"If it comes out that private gunmen were involved in it then we will have to take action. We have received complaints from both sides. Police will investigate whether guns or hand grenades were used," he added.

Parameshwara also pointed to the sequence of events leading to the violence, saying there was no commotion initially.

"There was no commotion till Janardhana Reddy came to Ballari," he claimed. "We will investigate that as well."

Meanwhile, police have detained two private gunmen Baljit Singh and Gurucharan Singh in connection with the firing incident. **PTI**

'In some cases, harassment can be difficult to prove'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

not limited to dowry demands alone. "The provision covers harassment of a wife by her husband or his family, with dowry being only one of the possible grounds. There have been instances where complaints were filed to exert pressure on the husband or his family to secure a settlement," said the officer.

The officer said that at the same time, many complaints are genuine. "While false cases do exist and I have personally handled several matters representing men where the allegations were found to be completely fabricated, such cases remain relatively rare," he said.

There are some other reasons why such claims can be made. Rajalaxmi said that in some situations, husbands are unwilling to provide any form of relief to their wives; they neither agree to a divorce nor offer maintenance or compensation. "In such cases, certain advocates advise women to file a criminal complaint as a means to compel the husband to come forward for negotiations, after which the case may be withdrawn upon settlement. There are instances where complaints are entirely false, but there are also cases where some degree of harassment exists, though not to the extreme extent alleged. Both situations coexist," she said.

In some cases, harassment is difficult to prove. "Both mental and physical abuse may be involved in harassment cases. However, when it comes to mental harassment, it is often difficult for a woman to produce direct evidence.

Constantly recording interactions is neither practical nor appropriate, as it would amount to an invasion of privacy. As a result, when concrete evidence cannot be produced, husbands are often acquitted, and such cases are subsequently labelled as false," Rajalaxmi added.

A senior city police officer said that false allegations, if established, can seriously undermine the credibility of genuine survivors. "Every complaint is treated seriously at the initial stage. However, during the course of investigation, inconsistencies may surface, leading the accused to allege that the complaint was motivated or false," the officer said.

According to the police, cases are categorised as false under three broad grounds: First, when the alleged incident did not occur; second, when there is insufficient evidence to substantiate the complaint; and third, when the case arises out of a misunderstanding. Senior police officials have directed investigating officers to initiate action against complainants found to have filed false cases, wherever the probe establishes the allegations to be untrue and a 'B report' is submitted before the court.

Police officials said they rely on medical reports, call detail records, witness statements, and digital evidence to establish the facts of each case. "We do not label any complaint as false without a thorough investigation. If a complaint is found to be malicious, legal action can be initiated against the complainant as per law," a senior officer explained.

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I, SYEDA AMINA TABASSUM AMAN, W/o SYED AMANULLA ASHFAQ, R/o No S4, 2nd Floor, AB Mansion Govindapura Arabic College Bengaluru- 560045. I have changed my name to SYEDA AMINA TABASSUM FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

I, RAHMATHULLA SHARIEFF, S/o NASRULLA SHARIEFF, R/O No T-3, Vas Residency DVG Road, BTS Layout Arekere Bangalore - 560076 . I have changed my name to RAHMATHULLA SHARIFF FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

I Bharati Naik W/O, Ashwin Kumar Naik R/o No 4, Ananya Kuteera, 2nd A Main, Next To Dhanush Hospital, Byraveshwara Nagar, Nagarbhavi Main Road, Bengaluru - 560072 have changed my name to Bharati Ashwin Naik.

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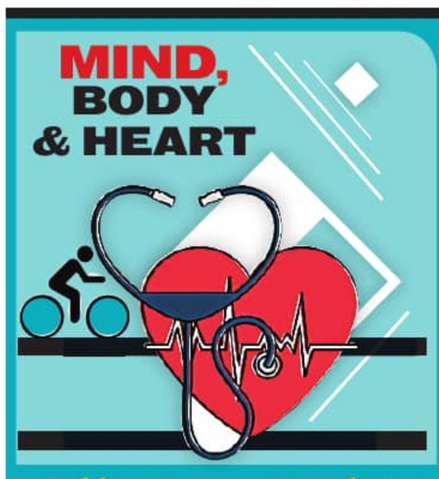

All you need to know about...

Home remedies

Garlic
More than just an aromatic, garlic can help ward off colds and boost immunity. Crushing or chopping raw garlic releases allicin, a sulfur compound with powerful antibacterial and antiviral properties. The allicin is what helps stimulate immune cells and fight off common pathogens.

Apple cider vinegar
Apple cider vinegar can work to ease acid reflux and heartburn. Taking a small amount of apple cider vinegar before a meal can help balance the stomach's pH level.
But don't forget to dilute it significantly to protect your teeth and throat.

Baking Soda Paste
All those bug bites and stings can easily be treated at home with a baking soda paste. Most insect bites and stings are acidic. Since baking soda is alkaline, it neutralises the acidic irritants. Applying a thick paste rapidly reduces the inflammation, itching, and stinging sensation.

Honey
This natural sweetener has so many amazing uses! Given its antimicrobial properties that help fight minor infections, it is great for soothing sore throats and coughs. Some cultures also use it to help heal wounds.

Cumin water
Cumin water works its magic to ease bloating and aid digestion. Cumin seeds contain chemicals such as cuminaldehyde, which promote the secretion of digestive enzymes, speeding up the digestion process. Boiling a teaspoon of seeds in water creates a drink that helps relax the digestive tract, reduce gas, and relieve bloating and general indigestion after meals.

Turmeric
Turmeric is perfect as an anti-inflammatory because of the curcumin in it. This is excellent for easing joint pain and improving general health, especially when mixed with black pepper for increased absorption.

Give peace a chance

The sun sets behind war-damaged buildings in Gaza City

I study war and peace and here's where I'd start

By any measure, 2025 was not a good year for world peace. Worse, it was just the latest of a decade-long decline of peace and upsurge of war. As author of a book on world peace and how we can achieve it (that's literally the title), here's my assessment.

Grim numbers

Peace is on the decline around the world by many measures. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data index, a UN-funded independent monitor, reports global conflict has doubled in the past five years.

The International Institute for Security Studies reports a 23 per cent increase in armed conflict in 2025 alone. Approximately 240,000 people were killed by violent conflict in 2025, it reports.

And the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index reported that peacefulness around the world has deteriorated for the sixth consecutive year.

Some of the symptoms of that decline:

- flatlining global trade
- the loss of 42% of government revenue in the developing world to debt interest repayments (the largest global creditor is now China)
- reductions in the amount spent on peacebuilding
- a 42% decline in the number of troops committed to peacekeeping,
- a dramatic increase in the internationalisation of armed conflict.

3 things driving those trends:

- decline of liberal democracy and rise of authoritarian powers
- profound shocks such as the global financial crisis and COVID
- problems generated by economic growth based on globalisation, especially rising inequality and social fragmentation.

Nationalist populism in the West and elsewhere is a product of these three transformations, which have unsettled comfortable post-Cold War assumptions about the democracy, wealth, and peace.

What drives war & peace

Some may argue that over the long term, the incidence of war and peace ebbs and flows naturally, driven by structural forces that defy human intervention.

But this ignores the immense strides in our understanding of the factors associated with both war and peacefulness.

The forces driving war and peace are not as mysterious as they once were. For example, it is well established that democracy, gender equality, and fair trade are associated with greater peacefulness.

So, it's perhaps no coincidence that as war increases, each of these social goods are either in decline or are severely challenged.

It is also well established that peacekeeping reduces civilian victimisation and conflict-related sexual violence.

Though individual wars have their own specific causes, war and peace, in general, are shaped by a limited set of factors.

Over the past two decades, researchers have done an excellent job identifying what those factors are. We know war is not randomly unpredictable or inexplicable. This means war is not beyond human control.

> **Governments and organisations can create conditions that make war less likely, and the instruments for limiting war more capable**

War is a choice

The idea that humans are naturally warlike is as facile as the claim that we are naturally peaceful. Anthropologists and biologists have demonstrated we are both. War is a social practice and like any social practice, is caused by human decisions. Humans have agency and choice. Certainly, social structures, political ideas and economic pressures influence choices, but they do not determine them.

This is not to say that "war is over, if we want it". War occurs because people have serious disagreements about important questions and values – things they cherish so much they would rather fight than compromise. But peoples, governments and organisations can create conditions that make war less likely, and the instruments for preventing, limiting, and resolving war more capable.

What is to be done?

International systems are forged by their members.

In the modern international system, that means states. States are primarily responsible for maintaining peace at home – and though some are obviously better than others, by and large, the state has done an excellent job of reducing violence in everyday life.

The building blocks for peace lie in the state, especially those that:

- are accountable (democratic)
- respect human rights
- have capable institutions
- provide dignified living and opportunities for all
- foster gender equal societies.

3 urgent priorities

First, we must reaffirm international support for the basic principles of the United Nations Charter, including the principal of non-aggression. In practical terms, this means standing resolutely against aggression and furnishing those who defend themselves against it – notably Ukraine – with every possible support.

Second, we must revive support for UN and regional peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and capabilities. Peacekeeping works; more peacekeeping works better. This is especially true when the priority is protection of civilians, women, peace and security.

Third, addressing the gravest crisis of our time: Gaza. To give peace a chance, that means deploying the International Stabilisation Force (the UN-mandated multinational peacekeeping force outlined in the Gaza peace plan). It must be given every authority and capability necessary to protect civilians, protect Israel from Hamas, and facilitate the extension of legitimate government under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority as a pathway towards Palestinian statehood.

World peace is possible because peace and war are human institutions, not forces of nature.

Even the most deeply ingrained institutions can be reformed. The abolition of slavery was considered impossible until it was achieved.

Yet to say world peace is possible is not to say that it is likely, much less that it is inevitable. But it is something worth studying and striving for.

(By Alex Bellamy, The University of Queensland, The Conversation)

MIRRORLIGHTS

Over 80% of psychiatric patients in India 'do not receive timely care'

The Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS) has expressed deep concern over the persistently high mental health treatment gap in India, noting that nearly 80-85 per cent of individuals suffering from psychiatric disorders do not receive timely or appropriate care.
This stark reality, which is supported by national and global evidence, was highlighted during the curtain raiser event of the 77th Annual National Conference of the Indian Psychiatric Society, ANCIPS 2026, to be held from January 28-31 at Yashobhoomi in Delhi.
Mental health experts warned that despite advances in treatment and increasing awareness, the majority of people with mental illness continue to remain outside the formal healthcare system.
Data from the National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) indicates that India faces one of the widest treatment gaps in the world, with over 85 per cent of people suffering from common mental disorders not seeking or receiving treatment.
In a global context, more than 70 pc of individuals with mental illness do not receive care from trained healthcare professionals, and in many low-income countries, fewer than 10 per cent of those in need actually access necessary treatment. **-PTI**

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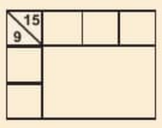
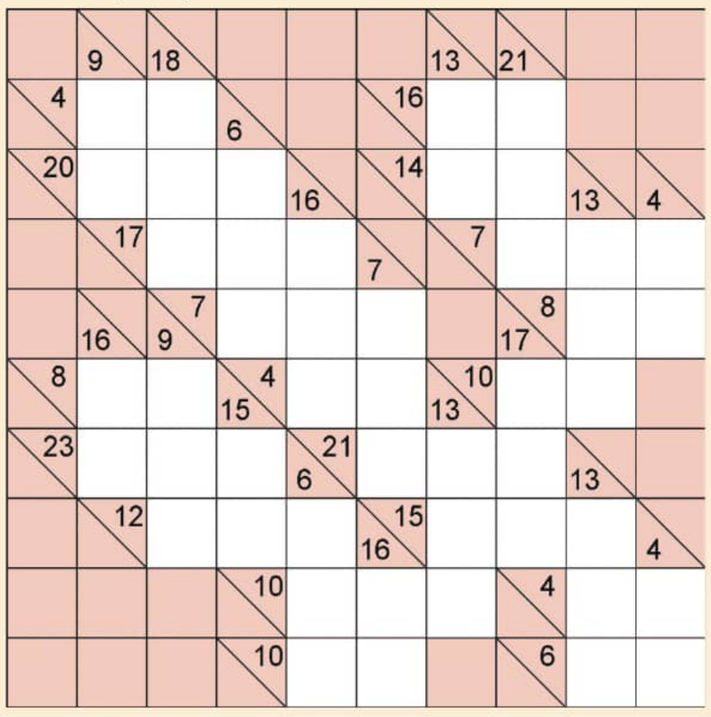
Kakuro

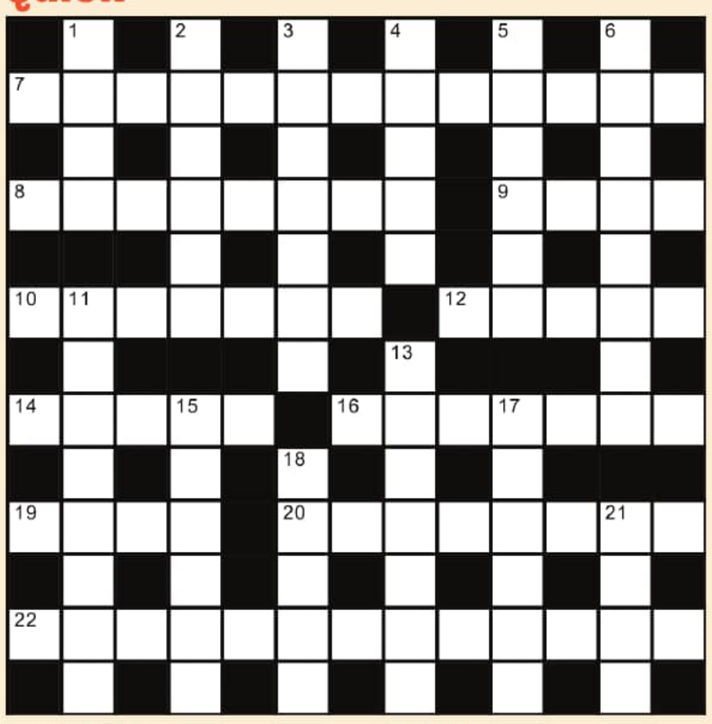
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Difference in views between parents and their children (10,3)
8 Spray (8)
9 Similar to, matching (4)
10 Decides to leave or withdraws? (4,3)
12 Berkshire racecourse (5)
14 Lets fall in drops (5)
16 Arsenic or cyanide (7)
19 __ __ example (e.g.) (2,2)
20 Easily duped or deceived (8)
22 Trustworthiness; reliability (13)

DOWN

1 Dickensian villain Uriah ___ (4)
2 Refuses to grant (6)
3 Promotes by good salesmanship (5,2)
4 Motorcycles informally (5)
5 Your dad's brothers to you? (6)
6 Withdraw argument in face of opposition (4,4)
11 Suffers death or ruin (8)
13 Intended rather than actual? (5-2)
15 Gasped (6)
17 Smother or choke (6)
18 Festival that marks the beginning of the Kannada new year (5)
21 Stringed instrument (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Z EQUALS N

FZ QAXQHPFPUCZ UV F ROPOEQ CSIQHP, EQHCKZUVQB FV SQYCZKUZK PC TQ.

Linemaro

Let's play a game. Winner dates the loser

Mindchow

An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered

Joke of the day

Man is the animal that intends to shoot himself out into interplanetary space, after having given up on the problem of an efficient way to get himself five miles to work and back each day

Loop

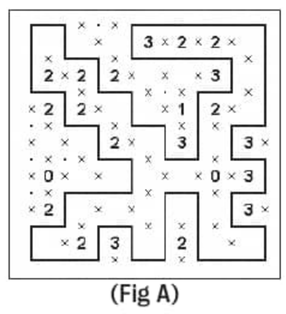
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

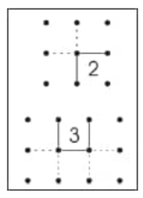
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

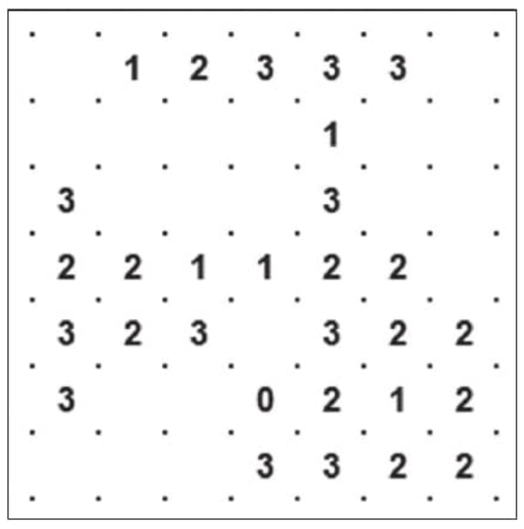
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



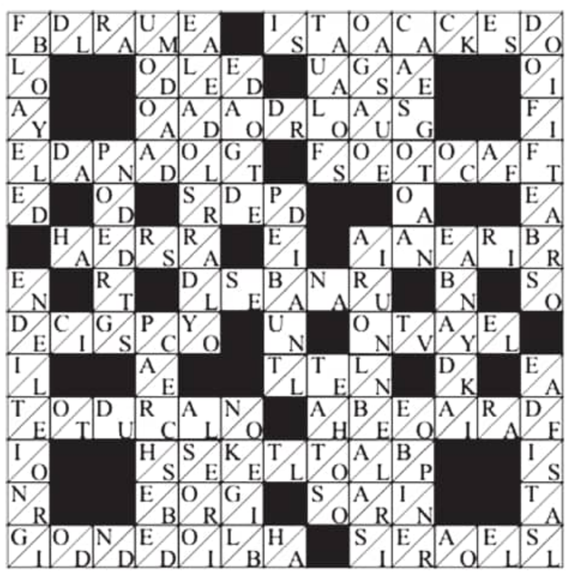
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



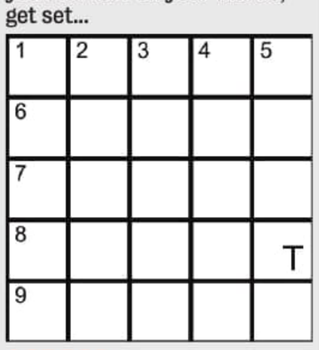
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

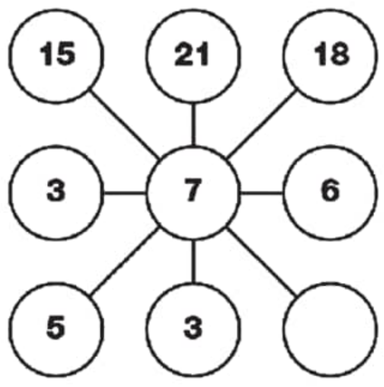
1 Hangs; 6 A dell; 7 Annum; 8 Cited; 9 Kunds

DOWN

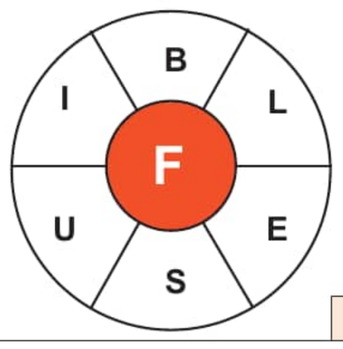
1 Luged; 2 Dun an; 3 A mind; 4 Lacks; 5 Thens

Mensapuzzle

Which number goes in the empty circle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

05 Average; **06** Good; **08** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		7	4	1	8	5	2	
			3					
				6	2		1	
		8					9	4
3	2						5	6
6	9					3		
	5		7	3				
					6			
	3	1	2	8	5	4		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 20

4 4 5 7

Medium = 14

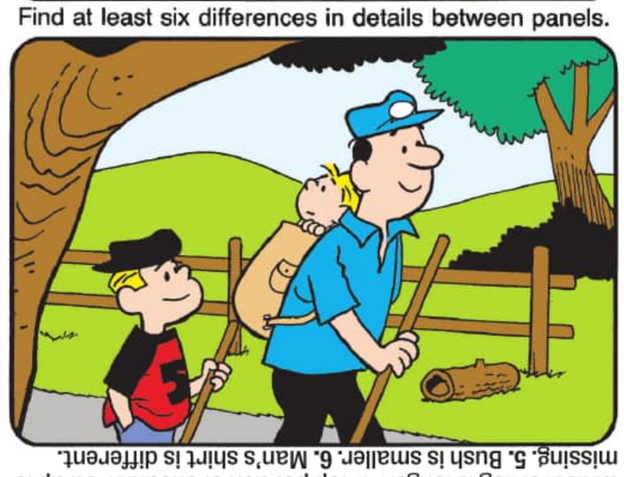
8 6 3 3

Hard = 45

2 5 9 8

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



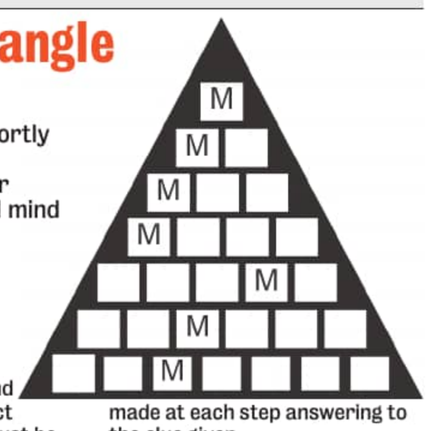
Differences: 1. Fence post is missing. 2. Tree branch is added. 3. Log is longer. 4. Top portion of shoulder strap is missing. 5. Bush is smaller. 6. Man's shirt is different.

Riddler

Those who crave power should be told That it comes not from owning gold. Yet is contained in tiny cans Of carbon, paste and shiny bands. I'm known by letters and by use, A poison source of needed juice. What is it?

Alpha triangle

1 13th letter
2 Money Ord.
3 June and July shortly
4 Bovine calls
5 Seinfeld's Kramer
6 mentis : of sound mind
7 Compile



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye

YOU ARE TAKING OLIVE TO HER WEDDING ON YOUR SHIP?
YAS!
YOU ARE GOING TO GIVE HER AWAY AT THE CEREMONY?
YAS!
SHE'S TOSSED YOU OVER FOR A KING AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP HER?
YEAH! AIN'T LOVE CRAZY?
©2025 King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved
popeye.com
4-5

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

HEY, SIRI, HOW DO I TURN A WOMAN ON?
OK, HERE'S WHAT I FOUND...
MOST ROBOTS HAVE A TOGGLE SWITCH
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www.creators.com
Bentkey

Hart of the city

WHAT IF WE JUST RUSH THE DOOR? ALL FOUR OF US SHOULD BE ABLE TO KNOCK IT OPEN!
WE GOTTA TRY!
ONE!
TWO!
THREE!
WHOA!!
WE DID IT.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

I ALMOST RAN INTO A DEER ON THE WAY TO WORK THIS MORNING!
YOU KNOW WHAT THE WORST THING IS ABOUT HITTING A DEER?
NO INSURANCE!
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BATIUK & DAVIS tombatiuk.com/books
9-25

Mutts

BONK.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO !?!
HIS WAS THE ONLY HEAD AROUND.
9-25
MUTTS © PATRICK MCDONNELL. DISTRIBUTED BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

The cosmos highlights dynamic transformation and exciting change for you this year. Be flexible and open to new paths, especially in your professional life. Networking and new connections will open doors you never anticipated. Embrace the unexpected; it carries the seeds of a major positive life shift and personal freedom.

Aries Mar 21–Apr 20

The moon blesses you, bringing professional growth opportunities today. Your relationship with your parents will progress beautifully now. Though travel may arise, it is advised to decline due to global circumstances. Focus on close connections.

Taurus Apr 21–May 20

Things previously out of your control are now firmly back in your hands. Financial gains from past investments will soon arrive. Reflect on mistakes, learn valuable lessons, and then quickly move on to better, positive things.

Gemini May 21–Jun 21

The day is full of vibrant energy, matching your enthusiasm for action. You confidently hold the reins on a key work project now. Your opinion is valued highly in major decisions at home. Embrace your power of choice today.

Cancer Jun 22–July 23

Old disputes with colleagues happily resolve, putting you in a positive mood. You will e ciently finish many tasks quickly today. This is a very favourable day to successfully launch a new hobby or a business venture.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

You will not be bothered by any health issues, enjoying great well-being today. Opportunities to advance in your professional life are coming. Investing in property is highly advised, promising fruitful future gains and growth.

Virgo Aug 24–Sep 23

Domestic responsibilities take centre stage, strengthening family bonds deeply. Your input is needed for all decisions, large and small. Approach the day with focused energy and a positive attitude. Family connections bring joy.

Libra Sep 24–Oct 22

The recent chaos gives way to a relaxed, unexpected sense of peace today. Use this welcome time to rest and re-energise your spirit fully. Singles are likely to meet and connect with a promising new person soon.

Scorpio Oct 23–Nov 22

You will be extremely social today, with others appreciating your presence deeply. Singles may find a meaningful connection with a coworker now. Couples find the right path to resolve any previous relationship issues smoothly.

Sagittarius Nov 23–Dec 22

Since your finances look strong, it is the perfect time for future investments now. Creative types will happily find their lost artistic inspiration. Couples should look forward to spending more quality time together today.

Capricorn Dec 23–Jan 20

Your sustained extra efforts at work are being positively noticed now. Go ahead and make that planned big luxury purchase today. Focus on setting clear goals for the coming year to ensure fast, deliberate action.

Aquarius Jan 21–Feb 19

Keep your supportive friends close today; they are your backbone for professional transitions. Your career is transitioning into a bigger, exciting spectrum. The day is especially beneficial for those working in the finance field.

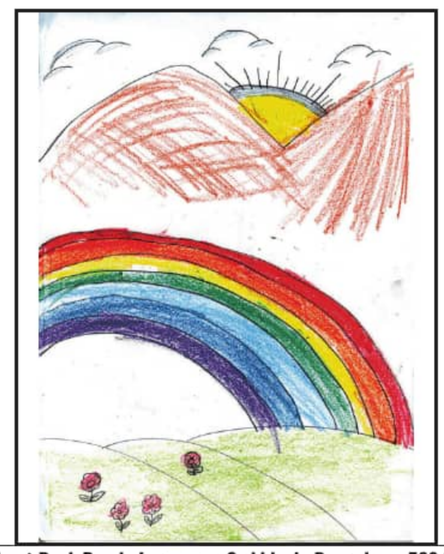
Pisces Feb 20–Mar 20

Devote today primarily to matters concerning your health and well-being. The new year brings abundant energy; use it wisely and eat right. Postpone any travel plans you were considering today; stay grounded for now.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE

P Rishika, Bengaluru



Ekansh, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

[5040 * √(2*8 / 2*10)] / 30
[5040 * √(1/4)] / 30
(5040 * 1/ 2) / 30
2520 / 30 = 84

BULL'S EYE

file, flub, flue, fuel, fuse, FUSIBLE, life, self

FAST FIVE

G	N	A	S	H
L	A	D	L	E
U	N	M	A	N
E	D	I	C	T
D	U	N	K	S

STRIKE OUT

B	L	A	M	E	■	S	T	A	C	K	E	D
O	■	O	L	D	■	A	G	A	■	I	■	■
Y	■	O	D	O	R	O	U	S	■	F	■	■
L	A	P	D	O	G	■	S	E	T	O	F	F
E	■	O	■	R	E	D	■	■	■	E	■	■
■	H	E	R	A	■	E	■	I	N	A	I	R
E	■	T	■	D	E	B	A	R	■	B	■	S
D	I	S	C	O	■	U	■	O	V	A	L	■
I	■	A	■	■	T	E	N	■	K	■	E	■
T	O	U	C	A	N	■	A	B	O	A	R	D
I	■	H	E	E	L	T	A	P	■	■	■	I
N	■	E	R	I	■	S	R	I	■	■	■	T
G	O	N	D	O	L	A	■	S	E	A	L	S

QUICK

S	■	D	■	I	■	E	■	E	■
D	E	P	E	N	D	A	B	I	L	I	T	Y
H	■	T	■	A	■	D	■	F	■	U	■	■
A	S	A	N	■	G	U	L	L	I	B	L	E
I	■	A	■	U	■	■	T	■	■	■	■	■
D	R	I	P	S	■	P	O	I	S	O	N	S
E	■	■	■	P	W	■	■	■	■	W	■	■
O	P	T	S	O	U	T	■	A	S	C	O	T
■	E	■	S	■	S	■	E	■	■	D	■	■
S	P	R	I	N	K	L	E	■	L	I	K	E
G	E	N	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	G	A	P
E	■	N	■	L	■	K	■	C	■	C	■	■
H	■	D	■	T	■	B	■	U	■	B	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE

3. Working in columns, divide the top value by the centre to give the bottom figure.

RIDDLER A battery

QUOTE UNCODE

An expectation is a future object, recognised as belonging to me.

SUDOKU

9	6	7	4	1	8	5	2	3
5	1	2	3	9	7	6	4	8
8	4	3	5	6	2	9	1	7
1	7	8	6	5	3	2	9	4
3	2	4	9	7	1	8	5	6
6	9	5	8	2	4	3	7	1
4	5	6	7	3	9	1	8	2
2	8	9	1	4	6	7	3	5
7	3	1	2	8	5	4	6	9

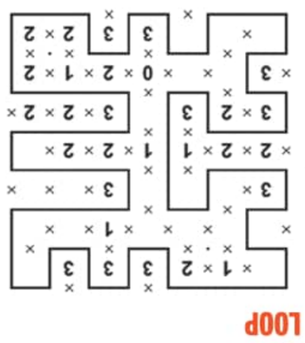
ALPHA TRIANGLE

M, MO, Mos, Moos, Cosmo, Compos, Compose.

GO FIGURE

Easy
4 + 5 + 7 + 4 = 20
Medium
8 + 6 − 3 + 3 = 14
Hard
8 + 2 − 5 x 9 = 45

LOOP



KAKURO

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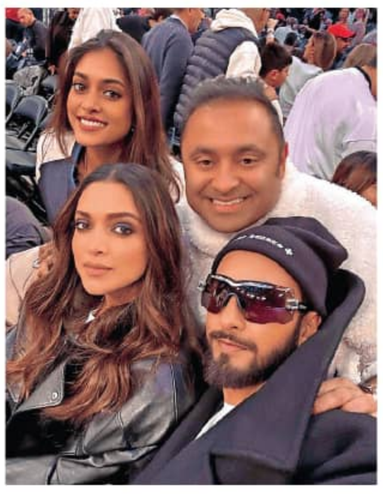
 # Big privilege
Directing Shabana Azmi in 'Imaginary Rain' is my biggest privilege: Chef Vikas Khanna on new movie

Deepveer serve looks at NBA game

Bollywood power couple, Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh, have been soaking in the festive spirit in New York City, and fans couldn't quite believe their eyes when the two turned up at an NBA match.

Twinning in shades of black and white, the stars took their courtside seats at a recent NBA basketball game. While in their seats, the couple were approached by fans for photos, which they happily obliged and posed for selfies. Pictures and videos from the match, doing the rounds on social media, show Deepika and Ranveer in great spirits as they enjoyed their game date.



Among the videos doing the rounds online, one clip saw Ranveer explaining the game to Deepika, who leaned in and listened attentively.

For the casual day out, Deepika turned heads in an oversized leather jacket paired with a white T-shirt and classic blue jeans. Ranveer, on the other hand, twinned with his wife in a black coat layered over a white tee and baggy trousers. He topped the look off with a beanie and sunglasses. **–ETimes**

On a roll

Kalyani to be seen in Hindi zombie film next?

Kalyani Priyadarshan riding high on the success of Dulquer Salmaan backed 'Lokah : Chapter 1 Chandra' is all set to take a major leap into Hindi cinema, having been locked opposite Ranveer Singh in 'Pralay', an ambitious zombie thriller directed by Jai Mehta- son of Hansal Mehta.

Lokah went on to be the biggest Malayalam hit of all time and the second highest grossing female led film of India. Lokah is a 5 chapter series and Kalyani will be featured in all the chapters.

For Ranveer, Pralay represents a sharp pivot, riding high after Dhurandhar emerged as one of the biggest box office triumphs of recent times, the actor is now choosing to headline a genre still relatively unexplored in mainstream Hindi cinema. Zombie films have not been attempted in Hindi cinema barring one attempt by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK with 'Go Goa Gone' and people till date are asking for its sequel.

Industry insiders suggest that 'Pralay' is being mounted on a significant budget, with extensive VFX and worldbuilding at its core. For Kalyani who has been part of mostly Malayalam films this is her moment to go Pan-India.

Journalist Rahul Raut broke the news about Kalyani on his social media platform first.

–ETimes

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Chowkidar on Jan 30

The multi-lingual movie Chowkidar is scheduled for release on January 30, Dhruva Sarja announced on January 1. Helmed by Chandrashekar Bandiyappa, Chowkidar is expected to be a memorable movie for hardcore fans of Saikumar and Pruthvi Ambaar. Saikumar, who is celebrating 50 years in cinema, plays the lead in the movie.

Chowkidar is Bandiyappa's fourth film as a director. Bandiyappa is an advocate practising at the Karnataka High Court. "Chowkidar is a commercial entertainer with a message to the audience. We are planning to release its trailer on January 14 and organise a pre-release event at one of the theaters in Bengaluru on January 25," said the director. The director said that he was amazed by the dedication and commitment of Saikumar during the shooting. "Saikumar plays a unique character in the movie. This may very well be the first of its kind role in his acting career," the director said.

The movie also features Dhanya Ramkumar, Sudharani and Dharma.

Kiara-Sidharth step out in style

Bollywood couple Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra were spotted in Mumbai on Sunday as they stepped out together for a shoot. The two, who are often seen winning hearts with their chemistry, caught the attention of fans and photographers alike.

Kiara looked graceful and fresh during the outing. In a video shared by Mumbai paparazzi, the actress was seen wearing an off-white maxi dress.

She kept her look simple with minimal makeup and styled her hair neatly. The actress was all smiles as she posed for the cameras.

Sidharth Malhotra matched her charm in a relaxed look. The actor wore a black hoodie which he paired with black pants. He kept the look casual and comfortable for the day.

On the work front, Kiara Advani will next be seen in Yash's upcoming film 'Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups.'

She will be playing a character named Nadia in the film. The first look of Kiara from the movie was released in December last year. The film stars Yash in the lead role and is written by Yash and Geetu Mohandas.

It is directed by Geetu Mohandas and has been shot in both English and Kannada, with dubbed versions planned in several Indian languages. **–ANI**

DiCaprio to miss Palm Springs Film Fest Awards

Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio will not attend this year's Palm Springs International Film Festival Awards Gala after being unable to travel due to airspace restrictions linked to the developing geopolitical situation in Venezuela, festival organisers said, according to Variety.

DiCaprio was scheduled to be honoured with the prestigious Desert Palm Achievement Award for his performance in 'One Battle After Another'. However, as reported by Variety, the Oscar-winning actor was unable to depart from St. Barts, where he was vacationing with family and friends, due to disruptions in air travel following recent international developments that have impacted flight operations.

In an official statement, a spokesperson for the Palm Springs International Film Festival confirmed DiCaprio's absence from the gala, citing unforeseen travel complications. "Leonardo DiCaprio is unable to join us in person tonight due to unexpected travel disruptions and restricted airspace. While we will miss celebrating with him in person, we are honoured to recognise his exceptional work and lasting contributions to cinema. His talent and dedication to the craft continue to inspire, and we are delighted to celebrate him with the Desert Palm Achievement Award this evening," it read. **–ANI**

Jana Nayagan in Kannada

The much-awaited trailer of Jana Nayagan is out now, and it has taken the internet by storm. The movie is scheduled to release in Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, and Malayalam. The trailer crossed 5 million+ real time cumulative views in just 5 minutes of its release, marking an unprecedented response.

Clocking in at 2 minutes and 52 seconds, the trailer has sparked excitement with audiences praising its rousing music, scintillating action sequences and balanced emotional moments.

Starring Thalapathy Vijay in the lead, the film features an ensemble cast including Pooja Hegde, Bobby Deol, Mamitha Baiju, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Prakash Raj, Priyamani, Narain, and others.

The movie is backed by Venkat K Narayana, directed by H Vinoth, with cinematography by Sathyan Sooryan ISC and editing by Pradeep E Ragav.

Producer Narayana said, "The overwhelming response at the Jana Nayagan audio launch in Malaysia is a testament to the extraordinary bond Vijay Sir shares with his fans. Entering the Malaysia Book of Records is a moment of pride for all of us."